THE SOLITUDE OF TOPAZ

Not much remains of the original Topaz site, but the Topaz Museum is ensuring that what took place there is never forgotten.

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Part 2 of the Redress Plenary From the JACL National Convention

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GFBNEC Names New Chairman and Board Members

Hawaii JACL’s Jacce Mikulanec contemplates the solitude of Topaz.
2 JACL APOLOGIZES TO TULE LAKE RESISTERS

Dear Editor,

The new generation of JACL leaders and members should be congratulated for acknowledging and understanding the need for voting for the resolution offering a sincere apology to Tule Lake resisters. The National Council of the JACL took the action on Aug. 3, 2019, at its National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah.

In adopting the apology resolution, the National Council of the JACL resolved that in the spirit of reconciliation, forgiveness and community unity, a sincere apology would be offered to those who were imprisoned in the Tule Lake Segregation Center for nonviolent acts of resistance and dissent, who suffered shame and stigma during and after the war due to the JACL’s attitudes and treatment toward individuals unfairly labeled “disloyal,” the National Council also resolved that all chapters understand the issues of imprisonment, mistreatment and resistance of Tule Lake resisters; update the JACL Curriculum Guide and teaching materials; and recognize Tule Lake resisters at an appropriate public ceremony during the 2020-21 biennium.

Past attempts of apology resolutions were blocked by past JACL leaders and Nisei veterans who long maintained animosity toward Tule Lake resisters for physical attacks by extremists against JACL leaders, and exemption from the draft, while Nisei veterans made major sacrifices. These issues were brought up again by a minority of JACL delegates in opposition, but many delegates spoke in favor of the resolution and carried the day. The co-sponsors of the resolution were the Pacific Northwest District Council and the Northern California-Western Nevada-Pacific District Council. The key leaders of the committee effectively shepherding the resolution were National JACL Board Member Haruka Roudesh and Stan Shikuma of the Seattle chapter.

This is a historic moment in the history between the JACL and Tule Lake resisters that extends back 76 years. In 1943, the War Relocation Authority, with the concurrence of the JACL, administered and summarily sent all persons who resisted the “loyalty questionnaire” in any way — i.e., refusing to answer, answering in the negative, answering with a qualified yes — to the Tule Lake Segregation Center that was converted into a high-security prison.

Tule Lake resisters totaled 12,000 inmates, and immigrant women were particularly vulnerable. Unlike in other camps where security was lax, they were treated like enemy alien prisoners and under the threat of prisoner exchanges and deportation to Japan after the war. Even after the war, the JACL, with its super-patriotism position, long denigrated Tule Lake resisters. As a result, Tule Lake resisters were stigmatized and slurred as the “No-Nos” by the Japanese American community to this day. Tule Lake resisters, family and descendants can take comfort from this recognition and apology by the JACL. This apology was long past due, as 76 years of stigmatizing has been hurtful and wrong.

We are thankful to the new generation of JACL leaders and members to try to stop the stigmatization, admit past wrongs and divisions and hopefully achieve reconciliation and unity to the Japanese American community. Then this can be considered a victory for Tule Lake Resisters and the JACL.

Sincerely,
Yukio Kawaratahi

Dear Editor,

During World War II, Japanese Americans were detained in incarceration camps just because they looked like the enemy, Japan. Today, immigrant children are being removed from their families and put into detention centers just because President Trump hates immigrants. I’m going to talk about their similarities and why people should not be put in these camps just because of their looks or where they come from.

Japanese incarceration camps were established during World War II by President Franklin Roolsevelt through his Executive Order 9066. From 1942-45, it was the policy of the U.S. government that people of Japanese descent would be placed in isolation camps. These camps are now considered one of the most horrible violations of American civil rights in the 20th century. Immigrant families, including children who now seek a better life in the United States are being separated when they try to move here. The detention centers that children are being held in are unsafe and unhealthy. Immigrant and refugee children should be treated with dignity and respect and should not be exposed to conditions that may harm or traumatize them.

From the moment children are in the custody of the United States, they deserve good care. Immigrant and refugee children should be treated the same way — i.e., refusing to answer, answering in the negative, answering with a qualified yes — to Tule Lake Segregation Center that was converted into a high-security prison.

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Sincerely,
M. Aki, 6th Grader
I’ve Heard ‘Go Back Where You Came From’ Too Often in My Life

By Gil Asakawa

I was driving on the highway one night some years back between Denver and Boulder, when I got harassed by a couple of young white guys, probably in their teens or early 20s at the most, who were tailgating me. When I pulled off at an exit, they followed me, so I turned into a parking lot and got out of my car. They did the same and started yelling at me. “Go back to China, you dirty Jap! Remember Pearl Harbor!” they said.

I shot back some pleasantries myself, educating them on the fact that I’m Japanese American, and China is different from Japan. At one point, I remember telling them that I was more American than they were, and I also noted that I spoke better English than they did. I ended the “conversation” by pointing out that they were driving a “Jap” car, a Honda Civic. Idiots.

This incident goes hand-in-hand with the many slights, insults and racist stupidity I — and I suspect many of you readers — have endured in my life. I was born in Tokyo, so “I’m not from here.” But my dad was in the U.S. Army, and I was born in a military hospital and raised around military bases until we moved to the States when I was 8. So, how much more American do I need to be?

Still, once I moved to the U.S., I learned to dread every Dec. 7 and the inevitable verbal assaults of “Remember Pearl Harbor!” and “Sneaky Jap!” I also bit my tongue whenever someone randomly “ching chonged” me on the street or held their eyes in a ridiculous slant.

Not that long ago, after I had moderated a panel at the prestigious SXSW Music & Media Conference in Austin, Texas, I encountered a dude in a cowboy hat who blocked my way in a hallway and snickered, “In this country, we pass on the left.”

My friends at the Denver Post didn’t believe me when I told them that when I walk down the sidewalk, white people expect me to move out of the way, even if they could easily shift over. They believed me when we went out during lunch to the downtown 16th Street Mall, and they saw this happen again and again. It got to the point where I’ll go out of my way to not move aside and hit the white person, then say, “Excuse YOU.” Petty, yes, but it’s a little victory that vents my frustration.

So, when Donald Trump — the president of the United States — recently began attacking four elected lawmakers in Congress as un-American foreigners and said that they should “go back” to where they came from, I got a hard pit in my stomach. I knew this script. I wasn’t surprised when at his next rally, his followers began chanting, “Send her back!”

Just last week, Trump also mocked the accen- t of the leaders of Japan and South Korea. I wouldn’t be surprised if he pulled his eyes back sometimes, too.

Our president’s undisguised racism has apparently inspired people such as the self-confessed El Paso, Texas, shooter, who was accused of shooting people in a Walmart knowing that that’s where Latinos — including those from Mexico, right across the border in Cuidad Juarez — would be shopping for school supplies.

Our president has given permission to his base, many apparently who felt they were being smothered by “political correctness” in the past several decades since the civil rights movement earned hard-fought freedoms for African-Americans and other people of color. People who maybe would not have yelled slurs and slights at me (OK, those young men were not smothered by political correctness at all) now feel empowered to “let their racist flag fly” (apologies to the hippie generation, who coined the term “let the freak flag fly”).

The most basic rule about psychotropics is that they are drugs of last resort, and a care planning meeting is the best place to discuss and consider non-drug-related options such as exercise, activities, pets, music and supervised trips outside the nursing home. Before consenting to an anti-psychotic or any other behavior-modifying drug, residents and representatives should demand a full and careful discussion of nondrug-related strategies. Rather than administering a psychotropic drug for a resident’s “agitation,” for example, the nursing home staff may want to speak to the resident differently or provide activities that make the resident more comfortable. Good dementia care requires listening to a resident and recognizing individual needs.

In deciding whether use of a particular drug is advisable, a good rule of thumb is to consider whether the drug’s use is intended to treat a diagnosed health problem or keep the resident more manageable. If the benefit is to the resident, then use of the drug may be advisable. If, on the other hand, use of the drug would be largely for the nursing home’s benefit — for example, to keep the resident quiet and out of the way — then the drug likely should be refused.
The three-day event celebrates Japanese American heritage, arts and cuisine to recognize the 150th anniversary of the first Japanese pioneers’ arrival in Placerville, Calif.

PLACERVILLE, CALIF. — WakamatsuFest150 was held recently to celebrate Japanese American heritage, arts and cuisine at Wakamatsu Farm and recognize the 150th anniversary of the first Japanese pioneers’ arrival in Placerville, where they established the first Japanese colony in America in June 1969.

Hosted by the American River Conservancy, the occasion honored Japanese American immigration and drew a large, diverse international crowd to the one-time-only historic occasion.

In all, more than 4,000 visitors, performers, artists, vendors and volunteers joined WakamatsuFest150 over the course of the three-day event from June 6-9. The site itself is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and was declared California Registered Historic Landmark #815 during the June 1965 centennial celebrations hosted 50 years ago at Wakamatsu Farm.

Artists shared ongoing hands-on demonstrations of Japanese art forms such as haiku, te-mari balls, calligraphy, sumi-e painting, wood block printing and silk spinning, spooling and weaving. Lecturers, farmers and historians also discussed tea, history, their books and Japanese culture. Musicians also performed for the crowd and masters and students demonstrated Japanese archery, swordsmanship and martial arts.

A Buddhist service was also conducted each day at the gravesite of Okei-san, the first Japanese woman and immigrant buried on American soil. Her gravesite is the main reason why the Wakamatsu story has survived over the past 150 years.

For more information, contact the Venice-WLA JACL at 310-398-4343 or visit the chapter on Facebook.
PLENARY PART 2: FINDING SUCCESS FOR REDRESS

CWRIC hearings, a figure is reached and a secret White House meeting

By P.C. Staff

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is Part 2 of an article that appeared in the Aug. 16-29, 2019, edition of the Pacific Citizen about the plenary from the 2019 National JACL Convention on the early years of redress.)

Although disliked by many Japanese Americans both inside and outside the JACL at the time of its formation, the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians would prove to be one of the many critical building blocks to the eventual success of Japanese American redress via the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 that was enacted by President Ronald Reagan. The CWRIC hearings allowed Issei and Nisei to not only publicly share the repressed-experiences of their wartime experiences of removal and incarceration at the hands of the federal government and thereby educate lawmakers and the general populace, but also the commission’s findings and recommendations served to underpin everything that was to come.

Nevertheless, those hearings were painful for everyone involved.

“That was the most-grueling, difficult experience I had ever gone through in my life, sitting there in these hearings,” said John Tateishi, chair of the JACL’s National Committee for Redress. “I felt guilty because I was involved in the decision and trying to get this to happen. I felt it was my obligation to sit through the hearings, but I could only take so much at a time. After a couple of hours, I’d have to go outside and get relief.”

Following the meeting with the “Big Four” — Sens. Inouye and Matsunaga, and Reps. Matsu and Mineta — (see Part 1 of this story, P.C., Aug. 16-29, 2019), the JACL’s National Committee for Redress met in March 1979. Tateishi said that “nobody liked the idea of a commission.” But in a vote of 4-2, a decision was made to pursue legislation to create what would become the CWRIC.

Tateishi knew the reaction to the committee’s vote would be bad.

“But I had no idea how bad it would be,” he said. “It was one of those things where you feel like finding somewhere to go hide. The reaction within the JACL was just as harsh as it was in the community.”

It would take some political sleight-of-hand to show that the majority of JACL members were on board with the idea of a commission.

“Karl Nobuyuki, who was the director at the time, he and I decided we should do a ratification process and silence our critics. It was risky, but we did an assessment and thought we could get the chapters to support this,” Tateishi said. “We did the mailing, and we got back results, and we announced it vaguely that there was a 5-1 decision to support the commission strategy.

“What we didn’t say was that the majority of the chapters didn’t vote,” Tateishi continued. “They were so upset — this was the way they voiced their protest. If they had voted, that ratification would have been against the idea of the commission strategy.”

In hindsight, the value of the CWRIC seems obvious. But just how harsh were the reactions to the concepts of a commission and redress itself?

“They were opposed to redress because they didn’t want to talk about camp,” Tateishi said, referring to the Nisei. “What happened to us is that after the war, we built that wall of silence. Nobody talked. A lot of the Niseis didn’t tell their kids about what they experienced.”

Getting the Nisei to talk at the CWRIC hearings was crucial, Tateishi said because “without the Nisei, it would have been an utter failure.”

“My biggest fear was, ‘What in the hell do we do when the commission comes to town?’ The whole purpose was to get Japanese Americans up there, speaking about what they experienced. I didn’t know if it would work because as Ron [Wakabayashi] pointed out, in these mock hearings we held, no one could get through their testimony.”

Ultimately, as history shows, the gamble paid off.

After the schedule for the 10 hearings in several major U.S. cities — including Bos- ton, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington, D.C. — was released in 1981, survivors of the camp experience did come out and talk.

“It was a really courageous thing they did, and it was difficult for them,” Tateishi said. “They’re the ones who changed the mind of the country about what happened to us because every night it would be on the news, every hearing we had.”

Moderator Floyd Shimomura added, “I think that the response that the Nisei got was a great deal of sympathy and sorrow for the hardship that they had to go through, from friends and people who knew them, and I think that started to make them think they could come out and talk about this.”

During the era of redress that this plenary covered (1977-84), it was noted that things we now take for granted, such as inexpensive long-distance phone calling, not to mention email and social media, did not exist. Therefore, disseminating news of the redress campaign via the mass media — meaning mainstream newspapers and the three national TV networks — took cleverness and making the most of the opportunities as they presented themselves. As noted, Sen. S. I. Hayakawa (R-Calif.), who was the keynote speaker at the Sayonara Banquet at the 1978 JACL National Convention, denounced the idea of pursuing monetary compensation.

The day before, the JACL had approved the resolution to pursue redress, including a de-mand for $25,000 in personal compensation. Tateishi got laughs from the audience when he said, “To this day, I have no idea how Hayakawa was invited to keynote at the Sayonara Banquet.”

Still, it was no laughing matter at the time because there were newspaper reporters in attendance who would report Hayakawa’s opposition to monetary redress, which Tateishi remembered Hayakawa describing as “absurd and ridiculous.”

It was necessary to turn Hayakawa’s lemons into lemonade.

Tateishi quickly drafted a news release to announce the board’s support of the idea from a publicity perspective.

“Then the New York Times came out with an editorial, completely different,” Tateishi continued. “We had it all set up so that we had people in different parts of the country ready to send in letters, and we concentrated the letters from people who were locally from an area. That was pretty much the media campaign.”

At the end of the day, even though Hayakawa’s stance was “disastrous,” Tateishi said they saw a way to work it to the advantage of redress.

In another media and anecdote, Ronald Kojiri, JACL’s Washington representative from 1978-84, recalled how he and Rep. Dan Lungren (R-Calif.), who served as the vice chair of the CWRIC and was its lone member who was against monetary payments, both appeared on Larry King’s overnight radio show.

“It was a cordial discussion, but it was very obvious Larry King was all for redress,” Ikejiri said. “Every time that Dan Lungren would come out with ‘no money,’ they deserve an apology, [King] would turn it around. He would help my argument, our argument, go in a different direction.”

Another tactic that kept the mainstream news media informed of the progress of the redress campaign was baked-in from the beginning, according to Tateishi, at the January 1979 meeting between the JACL National Redress Committee and the Big Four.

Tateishi credited Inouye for insisting that educating Americans be one of the objectives of the redress campaign, especially with regard to preventing such an occurrence from happening again. But he also had a practical idea from a publicity perspective.

“He said one of the things you could do is have the commission issue its report and then wait six months and have them issue the recommendations,” Tateishi said. Splitting those items would keep the issue in the news over a longer period of time, thus keeping it from being forgotten or buried.
THE SOLITUDE OF TOPAZ

JACL National Convention attendees visit the former site of the Topaz Relocation Center and Topaz Museum, a testament to all that has been overcome in the years since the incarceration era.

By Rob Buscher

On the Sunday after the JACL National Council concluded its official business, a hundred or so convention attendees had the opportunity to visit the former site of the Topaz Relocation Center. For many, this would be their first visit to an incarceration site, while others were visiting the place they used to call home.

Our daytrip consisted of a visit to the Topaz Museum, where we were greeted by museum staff and treated to a short video presentation about the history of Topaz, followed by free time in the museum and a bus tour of the Topaz site.

Despite the intensity of debates on the council floor at this year’s National Convention at the Little America Hotel in Salt Lake City, all divisions ceased to exist as our community gazed upon the barren desert plain.

Unlike Heart Mountain and some of the better-preserved camps, the Topaz site is completely devoid of structures — save for the poured concrete foundations that the barracks once rested upon. It was painfully clear how inhospitable this desolate climate must have appeared to its residents.

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Located about 10 miles from the Topaz site in the small town of Delta, one wonders if the site itself might be more impactful had the interpretive center been built on that land.

In this sense, the Topaz camp continues to provide a source of revenue to the people of Delta since there is little else that would attract an out-of-state visitor to the rural desert town.

Nevertheless, the exhibit display was a stirring and poignant reminder that extended beyond the platitudes of rhetoric that sometimes obscure the harsh realities of camp life.

According to statistics recorded at the museum, there were only six Japanese American families living in the town of Delta prior to World War II. Amidst the omnipresent anti-Japanese propaganda that preceded the wartime incarceration, the incoming residents of Topaz were viewed with distrust by many of the townspeople.

Although the local economy did begin to flourish from the construction boom, tensions were exacerbated when storekeepers could not keep up with demand as Japanese Americans were allowed day passes out of camp to go shopping for essentials that could not be bought in camp.

In a June 7, 1943, memo, Topaz Director Charles Ernst wrote about the “deterioration in the attitude of Delta people towards residents.” He explained that many of the townspeople saw its Japanese residents as scapegoats, stating, “For instance, if store-keepers run out of things, they explain this . . . by saying, ‘The damn Japs have bought us out.’ Shopkeepers hide some things under the counters . . . when residents are permitted to be in Delta in order to save them for the Caucasian customers.”

Others in Delta viewed the Topaz residents with suspicion simply because they lived behind barbed wire, figuring that they must have done something to deserve their incarceration. Another museum panel included a recollection from Delta resident Callie Morley of rumors that “the Japs had bought every butcher knife in town and were planning an uprising.”

Perhaps this paranoia contributed to the killing of Issei James Hatsuaki Wakasa, 63, by military policeman Pvt. Gerald Philpott, who claimed that Wakasa was trying to escape on April 11, 1943. Making matters more controversial, no warning shots were fired, and the only witness was another guard.

Their account does not correlate with the evidence recorded in the official police report, which showed that Wakasa was shot in the chest facing toward the guard tower and was actually several feet within the perimeter fence. Mass protests erupted, and all work stopped at Topaz until after Wakasa’s funeral was held. Despite mounting evidence that Wakasa was not trying to escape, Pvt. Philpott was found not guilty and transferred to a different post.

In the aftermath of this tragic event, security lessened, and the Topaz residents were given additional freedoms to come and go from camp.

Incarcration survivor Ben Takeshita recounted a fond memory of collecting topaz crystals in a nearby cave that he and some friends snuck off to one day. Feeling tired from their afternoon excursion, the boys flagged down a passing MP jeep who gave them a ride back to camp.

As time passed, the tensions between the Delta townspeople and Topaz residents lessened, with many of the townspeople finding employment related to the camp. Some even took sympathetic views to the plight of Japanese Americans, such as Delta teacher Melvin Roper.
Seeing the barracks being built, Roper observed that they were “very inappropriate for the type of weather that these people were to live in.” Roper went on to oversee the industrial arts program at Topaz High School, coordinating auctions of his woodshop students’ work to help young Nisei earn money in camp.

Another teacher, Louise Adams, helped to organize goodwill exchanges between Delta High School students and those at Topaz. One highlight was the musical production “Hi Neighbors,” which was performed by Topaz residents at Delta High School, including actor Goro Suzuki, who was featured in a prominent role.

One of the museum staff recalled a story from an elder Delta resident who remembered the reactions from a tear-filled audience at the irony of Suzuki singing “America the Beautiful” as part of that production, knowing he would return to his home behind barbed wire that night.

Suzuki would later go on to star in the 1961 film adaptation of “Flower Drum Song” as nightclub owner Sammy Fong under his stage name of Jack Soo.

Alas, while Suzuki was able to find success in his career as an actor (including a series regular role as Det. Nick Yeman on the ABC police comedy “Barney Miller”), he did so under an alias that hid his Japanese ancestry.

Like most topics in the Nikkei community, the layers of detail and nuanced differences between camp experience continues to amaze. As much sadness and trauma resulted from the incarceration at Topaz, so did beauty and joy.

The most striking example of the positive aspects of camp life in Topaz was the Topaz Art School, which was established by University of California, Berkeley, Fine Arts Professor Chiura Obata.

A career artist who left Japan at the age of 17, Obata had worked in newspaper and magazine illustration before joining the painting faculty at Berkeley in 1932. Although he had the opportunity to leave California during the “voluntary evacuation” to join his son, Gyo, in St. Louis, Obata chose to remain with his community and help them endure what would come through the pursuit of art education.

In the five months that Obata was held at the Tanforan Assembly Center while Topaz was being completed, he managed to establish an art school that taught more than 600 students ranging in age from 6-70. The school featured more than 23 subjects that included figure drawing, commercial art, architectural draughting, fashion design, sculpture and still life — in addition to more traditional Japanese mediums like ikebana.

Speaking of his motivations for opening the school, Obata wrote, “Art training gives calmness . . . [while making art] the mind is concentrated to a single objective. We only hope that our art school will follow the teachings of this Great Nature, that it will strengthen itself to endure like the mountains, and, like the sun and the moon, will emit its own light, teach the people, benefit the people and encourage itself.”

Later when they were moved to Topaz, the paintings and drawings created by Obata’s students would become the only recorded images made by Japanese Americans in that camp, as access to cameras was highly restricted.

From both his writings and artwork produced during the incarceration, it is clear that Obata viewed his art as a means of perseverance in this time of tribulation.

In a more pointed statement about the impact of art in weathering the incarceration experience, Obata wrote, “We will survive, if we forget the sands at our feet and look to the mountains for inspiration.”

Yet despite his best efforts to foster, amidst the tension of the loyalty questionnaire, Obata was physically attacked by an extremist who thought him to be a government spy because of the special privileges granted to him by camp administrators. After two weeks spent recovering in the Topaz hospital, Obata was released for his own safety and sent to live with his architect son in St. Louis.

Despite Obata’s departure, the Topaz Art School continued to thrive until the camp’s closure, under the direction of Matsusaburo George Hibi, another talented painter who helped Obata open the school.

Hibi wrote during his time in camp, “Let us art lovers keep on in the study of art tirelessly wherever we shall relocate or whatever fate shall face us . . . I am now inside of barbed wires but still sticking in Art — I seek no dirt of the Earth — but the light in the star of the sky.”

Hibi’s wife, Hisako, was also a painter who taught at the school. She recalled one class during a particularly cold winter day, “Water turned to ice on the watercolor paper while I was painting . . . Shivering, we kept moving our brushes and persisted in painting.”

Over the three years the school was in operation, more than a dozen instructors shared their time and talents with aspiring artists, including another Nikkei artist luminary, Mine Okubo.

Best known for her illustrated memoir titled “Citizen 13660,” Okubo was also involved in both the Topaz Times newspaper and TREK, a literary journal published in camp. Reflecting on the role of art in documenting their experiences in camp, Okubo wrote, “Cameras and photographs were not permitted in the camps, so I recorded everything in sketches, drawings and paintings.” Okubo’s illustrations of the daily hardships of camp life were among the first images shown to the general public depicting the realities of the incarceration, which were published in the April 1944 issue of Fortune Magazine.

After being hired to illustrate a special feature on the domestic homefront of wartime Japan, Okubo moved to New York City, where she worked for Fortune Magazine for several years. At least in her case, art would prove to not only be a method for enduring the indignities of wartime incarceration, but also a viable means to overcome them as well.

They say most great art comes from a place of pain. The art that came from the Topaz residents speaks to the incredible trauma they underwent as a collective community, but also stands as a lasting testament to the strength of their resolve to overcome the many injustices of that era.

It also reminds us of the important role that art has played in our community’s past and provides compelling motivation for incorporating the arts into our present-day advocacy efforts.
As it turned out, it was less than six months, Tateishi noted, adding that when the CWRIC report was issued, it led the news on ABC, CBS and NBC. About three months later when the CWRIC held another press conference and released its recommendations, the same thing happened.

“Every network and most local news started with the recommendations of the commission, which was $20,000, an apology and a trust fund,” Tateishi said. He also revealed why the original amount of $25,000 in monetary compensation became $20,000.

Tateishi said he had met on several occasions with Joan Bernstein, chair of the CWRIC.

“I was arguing for the commission to come out with monetary compensation, which was the JACL’s position. And then we started talking about the amounts,” he said.

Tateishi told Bernstein that he had heard the commission was considering compensation of $10,000.

“If you come out with an amount that low, the JACL is going to be screaming. It’s an insult,” he said.

Another figure being tossed around was $15,000. She told Tateishi it was likely that the commission would go with $20,000.

“I said, ‘It’s not enough.' Why not come out with $25,000?” he said.

Bernstein’s answer: “John, you know if we come out with $25,000, it’s going to look like we’re under the thumb of the JACL.”

“That’s why they came out with $20,000,” Tateishi said.

Interjecting from the audience, former Congressman and Cabinet member Norman Mineta chimed in and noted that it was the CWRIC’s special counsel, Angus Macbeth, who finally said, “It’s the money, meaning stop deliberating and just decide on a monetary figure.”

In other words, eligible Japanese Americans received 80 percent of what the JACL originally asked for — and the CWRIC didn’t look like it was being a puppet of the JACL.

When panelist Frank Sato was introduced, Shimomura noted that he had served JACL at the national level, first as secretary-treasurer, then as national president.

Sato was the “highest-ranking Japanese American in Ronald Reagan’s administration. He served as inspector general for the Department of Veterans Affairs. His appointment required Senate confirmation,” Shimomura said.

Shimomura noted that under President Reagan, Sato was “selected as the chief auditor for a committee that was trying to reduce wasteful spending, and he was highly regarded by Reagan and his administration. That’s indicated by the fact that in 1985, Reagan gave Sato the award for meritorious service and also indicated by the fact that in 1985, Reagan gave Sato the award for meritorious service and also approved when he was serving as national president of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (Berkman).”

For his part, Ikejiri’s view was that “when the time came that Ron wanted me, it was I didn’t want anything to endanger the relationship. When Carole Hayashino is the one who dug up the recommendation for him,” Ikejiri said.

Shimomura also noted that with the subject of reparations for African-American descendants of slaves again a topic of discussion, people are looking to the Japanese American redress campaign as a model.

Regarding redress and its meaning in the intervening years, former JACL National Director Ron Wakabayashi said, “Something really remarkable took place, and it was a cumulative effect of a lot of people’s contributions. We did it drop by drop.”

He closed by asking the audience to give a “shaka” salute to Hayashino, who he recorded on his smartphone to share with her.
GO FOR BROKE NATIONAL EDUCATION CENTER NAMES NEW CHAIRMAN, BOARD MEMBERS

LOS ANGELES — Go for Broke National Education Center has named George A. Henning as its new chairman, with Junior Bryant, Craig Ishii and Kimberlee Tachiki-Chin joining the board of directors of the national nonprofit organization, it was announced recently.

Henning is chairman, president and CEO of Pacific Global Investment Management Co., a Glendale, Calif.-based investment advisory firm he founded in 1991. He currently serves as portfolio manager for several of the firm’s investment funds. Henning holds a bachelor’s degree from Geneva College and a master’s degree from Indiana University.

A longtime supporter of GFBNEC, Henning was introduced to the Nisei veterans’ legacy by philanthropist and 522nd Field Artillery Battalion veteran Manabi Hirasaki, a close friend who shared his family history and World War II experiences with Henning.

“He has evoked interest in the Nisei veterans’ past from many current Japanese Americans, and his generosity has exerted the spirit of our community,” said Craig Ishii, president and CEO of GFBNEC.

Mitchell T. Maki, GFBNEC’s president and CEO, welcomed Henning’s appointment to the chairman’s role.

“We are fortunate to have George’s extensive professional and business experience to help us expand the legacy of our Nisei WWII veterans and their contributions to our democracy,” Maki said. “His leadership will help us attract new supporters and broaden our influences as we reach out to new communities and generations.”

GFBNEC’s new board members represent a range of professions and disciplines.

Bryant, an adviser to emerging start-up companies, previously served as vp and national marketing and sales director for Pacific Global Investments. A veteran of the National Football League, Bryant retired from the San Francisco 49ers in 2003 after a 10-year career as a defensive lineman. He also is active in philanthropic activities, serving as a board member for the Forever Young Foundation and co-founder of Legends of Sports Foundation. He holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from the University of Notre Dame.

Ishii, the integrated marketing communications manager at Beckman Coulter, has dedicated his career to businesses and organizations that support positive social development. He has served in several positions with Japanese American community organizations, including the JACL and the Little Tokyo Community Council. He also was a founding member and executive director of Kizuna, a nonprofit dedicated to educating and engaging the next generation of Japanese Americans. He holds a bachelor’s degree in history and economics from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a master’s degree in public administration with a certificate in nonprofit management from California State University, Northridge.

And Tachiki-Chin has served as senior field deputy for U.S. Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard for more than 20 years. She has extensive experience with community and nonprofit organizations, including the JAACL, the Asian Pacific Women’s Center and Pacific Asian Counseling Services. In addition, she is a founding member of the Asian Pacific American Legislative Staff Network. Tachiki-Chin holds a bachelor’s degree in kinesiology and physical education from California State University, Northridge.

Henning noted that the new board members bring additional depth to the GFBNEC board.

“We honor the Japanese American soldiers who served with loyalty and distinction during WWII, despite the U.S. treating them as a threat to their own country and the incarceration of many of their families,” he said. “Today, those lessons couldn’t be more relevant, with citizens of other races facing threats because of their cultural backgrounds or religious beliefs. Junior, Craig and Kim bring fresh expertise to our board as we work toward a future that values inclusion, tolerance and mutual respect.”

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Just this past week, a Japanese American man I know posted on his Facebook page that he was approached by a young man after a football game, who asked him where he was from. “Colorado,” he replied. The young man then asked him where he was born. “California,” he responded. My friend was told he looked “too Asian” to be born in the U.S.

I’m nervous that anti-Asian hatred will make its cyclical return and be added to the white nationalism and anti-Muslim sentiments that are already infecting our society.

To paraphrase Bette Davis’ line from “All About Eve”: “Fasten your seatbelts — it’s going to be a bumpy year (or more).”


SENIORS » continued from page 3

All adult patients have the right to determine what shall be done with their own bodies and thus must consent to any proposed health-care treatment. This precept is at the heart of American notions of personal autonomy and has been reinforced by a century of court cases and statutory law. If consent is not obtained before treatment is administered, the health-care provider is guilty of battery.

For patients who lack capacity to make decisions about their care due to cognitive disability, informed consent must nonetheless be obtained from the patient’s representative, usually a family member or a close friend.

“Say Judd, who’s the resident’s representative?”

Hopefully, YOU ARE!!!

While we are on the subject, do you have a power of attorney? My legal advice is any adult over 40 years of age should have a valid power of attorney because that’s when health issues generally start showing up. You will find there are two types of power of attorneys: (1) financial and (2) health care. It would be wise to have both.

In conclusion, if a psychotropic drug is being administered without permission, the resident or representative should demand immediately that the drug be discontinued. The demand should be in writing and emphasize how the nursing home has put itself in legal jeopardy by administering a drug without consent. Submit this demand to the director of nursing and the nursing home’s Grievance Official.

Judd Matsunaga is the founding attorney of Elder Law Services of California, a law firm that specializes in Medi-Cal Planning, Estate Planning and Probate. He can be contacted at (310) 348-2995 or judd@ellderlawcalifornia.com. The opinions expressed in this article are the author’s own and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Pacific Citizen or JACL. The information presented does not constitute legal or tax advice and should not be treated as such.

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~ A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS ~

**NCWNP**

‘Hold These Truths’ Performances Sacramento, CA Sept. 7; 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. California Museum Auditorium 1020 0 St. Price: Matinee free to the public (Q & A and Community Tabling to follow); Encore (Panel Discussion along with Ryan Yu) The ABAS Law Foundation proudly presents Jeannie Sakata’s “Hold These Truths,” concert readings of a solo play inspired by the life of Gordon Hirabayashi, who fought the U.S. government's orders to forcibly round up and mass incarcerate all people of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast during the onset of World War II. For free tickets and paid tickets, visit https://www.abaslawfoundation.org/speaker-series-truths-2/. Yes, you see “IP” in advance to ensure adequate seating.

Midor Kai Arts & Crafts Boutique Mountain View, CA Sept. 14; 9 a.m.—4 p.m. Mountain View Buddhist Temple Gym 575 N. Shoreline Blvd. Price: Free. It’s never too early to get a jump-start on holiday shopping! This event will feature many talented and creative artisans, including handcrafted jewelry, clothing, pottery, Asian foods, live entertainment and much more. All proceeds benefit nonprofit organizations, including the Asian Pacific Islander Leadership Institute, Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach, Japanese American Museum—San Jose and Yu Yi Kai-Keiro Kai Program. Info: Visit www.midordai.com or email Phyllis Osaka at posaki@gs-management.com or Marsha Baird at marshabaird@mec.com.

Tule Lake, America’s Worst Concentration Camp Sacramento, CA Sept. 14; 1-3:30 p.m. Buddhist Church of Sacramento 2401 Riverside Blvd. Price Free. This talk features historian Roger Daniels and Barbara Takei along with Suyama Project Coordinators Karen Umamoto, Martha Nakamura and Tom Nguyen. Takei and Daniels will talk about the book they are writing about Tule Lake, and the event will share the importance of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center’s Suyama Project, which aims to preserve the history of Japanese American resistance during WWII. Info: For additional information, contact impower@cacitakei.org or call (916) 427-1733. COPANI XX 2019 San Francisco, CA Sept. 20-22 West Bay Conference Center 1290 Fillmore St. Buddhist Church of San Francisco 1881 Pine St. Price: Registration prices vary; visit the website for more information. Every two years, COPANI brings together international Nikkeis to celebrate Japanese heritage, obtain knowledge about the Japanese American experience outside the U.S., practice foreign languages, make new friends and exchange ideas and interact with peers in engaging workshop. This year’s keynote speaker is An Evening with Norman Mineta. Info: Visit www.copani.org.

1100 Louisiana Blvd. S.E. Price: Admission: $5; Children 12 and under are free This annual family oriented event, hosted by the New Mexico JACL chapter, will take attendees on a journey through the arts, music and crafts of the Japanese culture, complete with vendors, performers and interactive activities for all ages. Back by popular demand is a ramen-eating contest until the leadership of the youth group from the UNMH Japanese Language Club. Tickets for admission can be purchased online at www.nmjacl.org. Info: Visit http://nmjac.org for more information and a program lineup.

Keiro Symposium: Aging Into Tomorrow Long Beach, CA Oct. 5; 9 a.m.—3 p.m. 333 E. Ocean Blvd. Price: $50 Registration Join Keiro for a day of innovative, thought-provoking sessions and panels that explore what aging into tomorrow can mean for our community. Keynote speakers include Dr. Candice Hall of Next Advanced Medicine and Tracey Doi, CFO for Toyota Motor North America. Registration is required. Info: Visit https://www.keiro.org/what-we-do/events/keiro-symposium?utm_source=abaslmtm_medium=ContemporaryAgeing_campaign=190618-reg.

Kokoro Craft Boutique Los Angeles, CA Oct. 6; 10 a.m.—4 p.m. JANM 100 N. Central Ave. Price: Free. The 11th annual boutique returns featuring 50 vendors selling unique jewelry, kimono fabric fashions, Gi Ant Robot merchandise, handbags, ceramics, glass art, pet accessories and much more. In addition, performances by harpist Audrey Kato and Yuijuu Daiko will also take place. All proceeds will benefit JANM’s education programs. Those who make a boutique purchase of $25 or more will receive a free same-day admission to the museum. Info: Visit www.janm.org/events or call (213) 630-1883.

**PSW**

Second Annual Keiro No Hi Festival Los Angeles, CA Sept. 14; 10 a.m.—4 p.m. JACCC Plaza 244 S. San Pedro St. Price: Free, but prior RSVP is required to receive free bento lunch, birthday gift or transportation. This year’s festival celebrates the community’s older adults, complete with musical performances, a series of health and aging-related workshops and resources to assist in the aging process. Complimentary transportation from numerous locations will be provided, as well as a bento lunch for attendees over age 60 and those seniors celebrating birthdays in 2019 will all receive a special gift with prior registration. Info: To register, visit www.keiro. org/ksb or visit www.jaccc.org/ keiro-no-hi-festival.

Aki Matsuri 2019 Japanese Fall Festival Long Beach, CA Sept. 20; 10 a.m.—5 p.m. New Mexico Veterans Memorial Park 305 Harrison St. Price: Visit website for information as it becomes available. This family oriented event serves to promote, perpetuate and share the Hawaiian culture in the Pacific Northwest through music, food, arts and more. This year’s event will feature a performance by singer Amy Harasashi. There will also be a musubi-eating contest. This event promises to be fun for all! Info: Visit seattlelivealohafestival.com.

**PNW**

Live Aloha Hawaiian Cultural Festival Seattle, WA Sept. 8; 11 a.m.—7 p.m. Seattle Center 305 Harrison St. Price: Visit website for information as it becomes available. This family oriented event serves to promote, perpetuate and share the Hawaiian culture in the Pacific Northwest through music, food, arts and more. This year’s event will feature a performance by singer Amy Harasashi. There will also be a musubi-eating contest. This event promises to be fun for all! Info: Visit seattlelivealohafestival.com.

Screening of ‘Hiro’s Table’ Portland, OR Sept. 14; 7:30 p.m.—9:30 p.m. Clinton Street Theater 2522 S.E. Clinton St. Price: $10 General admission; $8 JACL members (if purchasing in advance, contact Portland JACL for discount code) Presented by the Portland JACL, this screening of the award-winning documentary follows Japanese chef Hiroyuki Obayashi and his family from his birthplace in Los Angeles to their retirement in the Pacific Northwest. A Q & A with director/producer Lynn Harmonick and Obayashi follows the screening. Info: Visit http://constdx.com/show/portland-jacl-presents-histros-table.

**CCDC**

Water Lantern Festival Fresno, CA Sept. 21; 4:30-9:30 p.m. Woodward Park 7775 N. Friant Road Price: $30 until Aug. 30; $35 until Sept. 20; $40 on Sept. 21. The Water Lantern Festival is an incredible experience where family, friends and strangers celebrate life together. With your event ticket, you’ll be able to make your own unique water lantern, which will be launched during the evening event. It’s a moment to mark people, love, friendship and thankfulness to the community, the environment, to the world. Info: Visit waterlanternfestival.com.

**EDC**


Yayoiku Kusama: Love Is Calling Boston, MA Sept. 27—Nov. 25 Institute for Contemporary Art 25 Harbor Shore Dr. An icon of contemporary art, Yayoi Kusama has interwoven ideas of pop art, minimalism and psychedelia throughout her work in paintings, performances, room-size presentations, outdoor sculptural installations, literary works and more during her influential career. This exhibit is the most immersive and kaleidoscopic of the artist’s Infinity Mirror Rooms. For the 90-year-old artist, this exhibit represents a culmination of her artistic achievements. Info: Visit www.icaboston.org/exhibition/yayoiku-kusama-love-calling.

En trance New York, NY Through 2020 New York Japan Society Gallery 333 E. 47th St. This exhibit features a series of art projects aimed at bringing visual art and interactive experiences into the institution’s public spaces. Astor Bambino Nara launches the series with new works he created in Shigaraki, one of Japan’s oldest areas for pottery making. Info: Visit www.japansociety.org/page/programs/gallery-entrance.

**MDC**

When the Leaves Turn Denver, CO Sept. 17; 5:30-6:30 p.m. Denver Botanical Gardens 1000 York St. Price: Included with Gardens admission This event, made possible by the Shofu Foundation, is helping to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Shofu-En at the Denver Botanical Gardens. Visitors can enjoy two 15-minute performances by Denver Taiko and a brief lecture about the history of taiko drumming. Denver Taiko members, founded in 1970, will be able to make your own unique water lantern, which will be launched during the evening event. It’s a moment to mark people, love, friendship and thankfulness to the community, the environment, to the world. Info: Visit https://www.denverbotanicgarden.org/events/2019/9/17/denver-taiko-at-denver-botanic-gardens.

**MDC**

Live Aloha Hawaiian Cultural Festival Seattle, WA Sept. 21; 11 a.m.—5 p.m. New City Plaza Denver Taiko at Denver Botanical Gardens Denver, CO Price: Free. This is the largest Asian/Japanese festival in Chicago. The two-day event will feature a schedule packed with Japanese art, martial arts performances, fashion, vendors, kids tent and music and, of course, food! There will also be a Cosplay Contest as well. All of the festival foods will be prepared by chef Kevin Yu and his team from Kizuki Ramen & Izakaya and will feature takoyaki, chicken kaarage, potato croquette, okonomiyaki, sushi and other classic Japanese foods. This is an event for the entire family to enjoy. Info: Visit https://www.chicagocajc.jpwebмелло.com/events/kuzuki-chicago-japanese-matsuri-2019.

1457 N. Halsted St. Price: Free. This is the largest Asian/Japanese festival in Chicago. The two-day event will feature a schedule packed with Japanese art, martial arts performances, fashion, vendors, kids tent and music and, of course, food! There will also be a Cosplay Contest as well. All of the festival foods will be prepared by chef Kevin Yu and his team from Kizuki Ramen & Izakaya and will feature takoyaki, chicken kaarage, potato croquette, okonomiyaki, sushi and other classic Japanese foods. This is an event for the entire family to enjoy. Info: Visit https://www.chicagocajc.jpwebмелло.com/events/kuzuki-chicago-japanese-matsuri-2019.
In Memoriam

Ibaraki, Albert, 88, Los Angeles, CA, June 8.

Ikeda, Betty Reiko, 75, Glendale, CA, June 12; she was predeceased by her sister, Ruby Rumiko Ikeda; she is survived by her sister, Marie (Albert) Chan; brother-in-law, Albert Chan; brothers-in-law, Albert Miyasaki and Toshie Handa; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Ikeda, Mary, 98, Fresno, CA, May 20.

Inouye, Grace, 96, Cupertino, CA, July 24; she was predeceased by her siblings, Tomiko Tanase (Samuel), Mae Minato (Katsugi), Ann Masuda (Tom) and Ray Inouye (June); she is survived by many nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews.

Inouye, June Kiku, 84, Torrance, CA, May 8; she is survived by her sons, Wade (Juliann) and Michael Inouye; brother-in-law, Ben (Terrie) Inouye; sisters-in-law, Pauline Takahashi, Kimiko and Edie Inouye; gc: 2.

Ishii, Shigeru, 88, Anaheim, CA, Aug. 15; he is survived by his wife, Frances Ishii; children Wendy Hirano, Steven Ishii and Brian Ishii; gc: 5; ggc: 1.

Ito, Margo Naomi, 76, La Palma, CA, May 6; she was predeceased by her son, Ross (Natalie); she is survived by her husband, Henry; children, Ryan Ito and Remy (Arnold) Eclarinal; siblings, Melvin Miyasaki, Michael (Elizabeth) Miyasaki and Marcia (Don) Tschogi; gc: 3.

Kujubu, Chioko, 95, Los Angeles, CA, June 1; he was predeceased by his wife, Mary Miyoko Kujubu; he is survived by his children, Dr. Dean Kujubu, Dianne (Joe) Belli and Leah (Dr. Robert) Oye; gc: 4; ggc: 3.

Kunioka, Glorian, 84, Los Angeles, CA, May 26; she is survived by her husband, John; children, Kyle, Eline (Sheppard), Todd and Lorene (Miller); brothers, Clifford and Paul Araki; gc: 4.

Ikebuchi, Hideko Inouye, Mary (Tadayuki) Shigaki; sisters-in-law, Mae Shigaki, Betty Muramaru and Don (Anna) Nervik; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Kujubu, Chikao, 95, Los Angeles, CA, May 15; she is survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Kujubu, Dianne (Joe) Belli and Leah (Dr. Robert) Oye; gc: 3.

Matsunaga, Mark George, 56, Gardena, CA, May 5; he is survived by his wife, Janice Kimiko Masuzumi-Matsunaga; daughter, Taylor Fusaye Matsunaga; sisters, Sharon Lynn (Mike) Nowell, Julie Ann (Damon) Yates, Brenda Carolyn (Dave) Kim, Janet Ellen (Tony) Coleman and Lisa Michiye (Ronnie) Kimura; brother-in-law, Glenn Katsuo (Ana) Masuzumi; sister-in-law, Sharon Fujiwata (Paul) Sawai; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Nishida, Gwen, 57, Los Angeles, CA, May 8; she was predeceased by her father, John; she is survived by her mother, Kikuko; husband, Chris; children, Carly and John; she is also survived by 3 siblings and many other relatives.

Nishida, Shinobu, 85, Los Angeles, CA, May 26; he was predeceased by his wife, Miyoko; he is survived by his children, Elaine (Kevin Kojima) Shimomaye, Irene (Gary) Parsick and James Shimomaye; siblings, Matsu (Goldie) Shimomaye and Kyoko Teramoto; gc: 3.

Shigaki, Alfred, 92, Los Angeles, CA, May 8; he is survived by his wife, Masako (Nobu); children, Susan (Edmond) Young and Janice (Andrew Shiozaki) Shigaki; siblings, Sumiko Ikegami, Betty Muramatu and Don (Anna) Shigaki; sisters-in-law, Mie Shigaki, Hideko Inouye, Mary (Tadayuki) Tanaka, Elaine (Harry) Higa and Minako Nishihara; gc: 2.

Shimane, June Johnson, 95, San Jose, CA, May 12; he is survived by his wife, Yoko; sons, Casey and Michael (Christy) Ishii; granddaughter, Steven Ishii and Brian Ishii; gc: 4.

Shimane, Chiyoe, 83, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA, May 26; she was predeceased by her husband, Bert; she is survived by her children, Carolyn (Lantz) Campbell and Naomi (Curts) Kaneshiro; gc: 4.

Shimomaye, Satoru, 86, Los Angeles, CA, May 27; she was predeceased by her husband, Stanley Norhiro; children, Glenn and Polly Norhiro; brother, Tony Fujita; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Sawano, Yasuko, 95, Irvine, CA, May 1; she was predeceased by her husband, Kiyoshi; she is survived by her children, Alissa (Leon) Peterson, Albert (Audrey Wu) Sawano; gc: 3.

Senzaki, Ronald, 72, Los Angeles, CA, June 1; he is survived by his brother, Paul (Irene); he is also survived by a nephew, a niece and numerous cousins.

Shintani, Kazue, 97, Sacramento, CA, June 14; she was predeceased by her husband, Roy; sisters, Sakae Miyasaki and Toshie Hanita; she is survived by her children, Kathleen (Eiji) Yamamoto, Richard, Ruby (David Williams) and Dave; gc: 3; ggc: 2.

Takahashi, Gene Yuki, 68, Lakewood, CA, April 19; he is survived by his wife, Ann Takahashi; daughters, Lisa (Randy) Yaka and Stacy Takahashi; brother, Bruce (Sylvia) Takahashi; sister-in-law, Yoko (Ole) Nerven; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.
At this year’s JACL National Convention in Salt Lake City, I met Shin from Palo Alto, Calif. We were van seatmates on our way to visit the Topaz concentration camp and the museum that has been built there. We were not even out of the Little America Hotel parking lot, and I could tell that Shin was a walking and talking example of someone who continues to stay socially active and mentally sharp. At one point, I even suggested that he should write a book about his world travels and life experiences.

How many people can say they have visited 100 cities in Japan, toured South America, Europe and rode the Trans-Siberian railway through Russia? In between his travels between cities, Shin taught English and worked on a farm in Japan for three months to teach the new owners farming skills from the United States. Shin is in his 80s, and he had more energy and stories to tell than all of us in our van combined.

We all have read that staying socially active has always been good advice for staying happy and healthy. Well, now research shows just how meaningful those conversations and connections can be.

People who are more socially active in their 50s and 60s tend to have a lower risk of developing dementia, according to a new study. Researchers point to the concept of “cognitive reserve” — the mind’s ability to resist decline or failure.

Someone who saw friends almost daily at age 60 is 12 percent less likely to develop dementia than someone who only saw one or two friends every few months. Similar associations were found among people ages 50 and 70.

“People who are socially engaged are exercising cognitive skills such as memory and language, which may help them to develop cognitive reserve,” said the study’s senior author, Gill Livingston, a professor of psychiatry at University College London. “While it may not stop their brains from changing, cognitive reserve could help people cope better with the effects of age and delay any symptoms of dementia.”

Spending more time with friends can be tied to physical activity that also reduces the risk of dementia, according to Livingston.

“We've found that social contact, in middle age and late life, appears to lower the risk of dementia,” said the study’s lead author, Dr. Andrew Sommerlad of University College London. “This finding could feed into strategies to reduce everyone’s risk of developing dementia, adding yet another reason to promote connected communities and find ways to reduce isolation and loneliness.”

In the United States, 5.8 million people have dementia linked to Alzheimer’s disease, according to the Chicago-based Alzheimer’s Assn. Nearly all of them are 65 or older.

“One doesn’t need to travel the world like Shin, but being connected to people and pushing oneself or one’s loved ones to be socially connected are important to lower the risk of developing dementia.”

As I left Salt Lake City, Shin was taking a midnight train back to Northern California. I had a chance to say goodbye as we departed our van, but I know that I just scratched the surface of his ongoing life journey from being an inmate in Topaz, farmer to world traveler, teacher and energetic lifelong learner. I hope our paths cross again, as Shin passed along his generational wisdom through his many stories and memories.


Ron Mori is a member of the Washington, D.C., JACL chapter and manager of community, states and national affairs — multicultural leadership for AARP.